ISMAEL

Taleem & Tarbiyat Magazine for Waqifeen-e-Nau
QUARTERLY | ISSUE #20 | OCT- DEC 2020

TAHRIK WAQF-E-NAU

وَمَآ اَرۡسَلۡنٰكَ اِلَّا كَآفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيۡرًا وَّنَذِيۡرًا

محمد

"And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner for all mankind"
(Chapter 34, Verse 29)

FROM THE EDITOR

Muhammad (ﷺ) was the prophet and founder of Islam. Most of his early life was spent as a merchant. At age 40, he began to have revelations from Allah that became the basis for the Koran and the foundation of Islam. By 630 he had unified most of Arabia under a single religion. As of 2015, there are over 1.8 billion Muslims in the world who profess, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad (ﷺ) is his prophet."

Muhammad (ﷺ) was born around 570, AD in Mecca (now in Saudi Arabia). His father died before he was born and he was raised first by his grandfather and then his uncle. He belonged to a poor but respectable family of the Quraysh tribe. The family was active in Meccan politics and trade.

Many of the tribes living in the Arabian Peninsula at the time were nomadic, trading goods as they crisscrossed the desert. Most tribes were polytheistic, worshipping their own set of gods. The town of Mecca was an important trading and religious center, home to many temples and worship sites where the devoted prayed to the idols of these gods. The most famous site was the Kaaba (meaning cube in Arabic). It is believed to have been built by Abraham (Ibrahim to Muslims) and his son Ismail. Gradually the people of Mecca turned to polytheism and idolatry. Of all the gods worshipped, it is believed that Allah was considered the greatest and the only one without an idol.

In his early teens, Muhammad (ﷺ) worked in a camel caravan, following in the footsteps of many people his age, born of meager wealth. Working for his uncle, he gained experience in commercial trade traveling to Syria and eventually from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. In time, Muhammad (ﷺ) earned a reputation as honest and sincere, acquiring the nickname "al-Amin" meaning faithful or trustworthy.

In his early 20s, Muhammad (ﷺ) began working for a wealthy merchant woman named Khadijah, 15 years his senior. She soon became attracted to this young, accomplished man and proposed marriage. He accepted and over the years the happy union brought several children. Not all lived to adulthood, but one, Fatima, would marry Muhammad (ﷺ)'s cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib, whom Shi'ite Muslims regard as Muhammad's successor.

Muhammad (ﷺ) was also very religious, occasionally taking journeys of devotion to sacred sites near Mecca. On one of his pilgrimages in 610, he was meditating in the cave of Hira. The Angel Gabriel appeared and relayed the word of God: "Recite in the name of your Lord who creates, creates man from a clot! Recite for your lord is most generous…." These words became the opening verses of sūrah (chapter) 96 of the Qur'an. Most Islamic historians believe Muhammad (ﷺ) was initially disturbed by the revelations and that he didn't reveal them publicly for several years. However, Shi'a tradition states he welcomed the message from the Angel Gabriel and was deeply inspired to share his experience with other potential believers.

WELCOME TO

ISMAEL MAGAZINE

QUARTERLY | ISSUE # 20 | OCT-DEC2020

CONTENTS

04 **The Holy Quran**

05 **Hadith**

06 **Writings of Promised Messiah (a.s)**

07 **Caricatures, Violence & Freedom of Speech – How Did the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) Teach Us to React?**

11 **Tahrik-e-Jadid:** The magnum opus of Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud (r.a) (PART 1)

17 **OUR GOD -The Plight of Faith in the Present Age**

19 **Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib**

23 **A New Year's Celebration:** Prayer, charity and good-will to all

25 **Coronavirus - Persuit for a cure**

30 **Waqf-e-Nau Mauritius' virtual class with Huzoor-e-Aqdas (aba)**

23 | A New Year's Celebration

07 | Caricatures, Violence & Freedom of Speech

11 | Tahrik-e-Jadid

The Holy Quran

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَ مَلٰٓئِكَتَهٗ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ؕ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا

Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! you also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace.

(Chapter 33, Verse 57)

The sending down of blessings by Allah and His angels upon the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) signifies that those who seek to retard the progress of his cause by slandering him and bringing false accusations against him live in a fool's paradise. By their nefarious activities they can do him no harm. His cause will continue to progress and prosper because God and His angels bless it.

HADITH

اَللّٰھُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ عَلٰٓی اٰلِ مُحَّمَدٍکَمَا صَلَّیْتَ عَلٰٓی اِبْرٰھِیْمَ وَعَلٰٓی اٰلِ اِبْرٰہِیْمَ اِنَّکَ حَمِیْدٌ مَّجِیْدٌ
اَللّٰھُمَّ بَارِکْ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍوَّ عَلٰٓی اٰلِ مُحَّمَدٍکَمَابَارَکْتَ عَلٰٓی اِبْرٰھِیْمَ وَعَلٰٓی اٰلِ اِبْرٰہِیْمَ اِنَّکَ حَمِیْدٌ مَّجِیْدٌ

عَنْ رَكْبٍ الْمِصْرِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طُوبَى لِمَنْ تَوَاضَعَ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَنْقَصَةٍ وَذَلَّ فِي نَفْسِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَسْكَنَةٍ وَأَنْفَقَ مَالًا جَمَعَهُ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَعْصِيَةٍ وَرَحِمَ أَهْلَ الذُّلِّ وَالْمَسْكَنَةِ وَخَالَطَ أَهْلَ الْفِقْهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ

(شعب الإيمان 3116)

Rakb al-Misri reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Blessed is he who has humility without debasing himself, who lowers himself without humiliating himself, who spends wealth in charity and accumulates it without sinning, who is merciful to the lowly and downtrodden, and who accompanies the people of understanding and wisdom.”

(Shu’ub Al Iman 3116)

Sayings of the Promised Messiah (a.s)

Now under heaven there is only one Prophet and only one Book. The Prophet is Muhammad (ﷺ), the chosen one [peace and blessings of Allah be on him) who is higher and more exalted than all Prophets and is the most perfect of Messengers and is the Khātam-ul-Anbiya', and the best of men by following whom we find God Almighty and all the veils of darkness are lifted and the signs of true salvation are witnessed in this very life. The Book is the Holy Qur'ān, which comprises true and perfect guidance and effectiveness, through which knowledge and understanding of the Divine are obtained and the heart is purified of human weaknesses, and being delivered from ignorance, heedlessness and doubts, a person arrives at the stage of complete certainty.

(Essence of Islam | Vol 1 , Page 200)

CARICATURES, VIOLENCE & FREEDOM OF SPEECH

HOW DID THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SA) TEACH US TO REACT?

By: Sarmad Naveed, Canada

Originally Published in The Review of Religions

As if the world wasn't already dealing with enough.

In recent days, France has been made to deal with atrocities which no individual, community or country should ever have to deal with. First, there was the horrendous beheading of a school teacher, Samuel Paty, on 16 October 2020. Then on October 29 2020, the ghastly stabbing of three people in Nice. According to accounts, one of the victims was practically beheaded.

Such inhumanity has no place in our world. The Fifth Caliph and Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) categorically condemned these attacks when he said: 'The murder and beheading of Samuel Paty and the attack in Nice earlier today must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Such grievous attacks are completely against the teachings of Islam. Our religion does not permit terrorism or extremism under any circumstances and anyone who claims otherwise acts against the teachings of the Holy Quran and contrary to the noble character of the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

As the worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I extend our deepest sympathies to the loved ones of the victims and to the French nation. Let it be clear that our condemnation and hatred of such attacks is not something new but has always been our position and stance. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (peace be upon him) and his Successors have always categorically rejected all forms of violence or bloodshed in the name of religion.'

Yet another unfortunate byproduct of these events is the ensuing conversation surrounding Islam. At the outset, it must be clear that in the case of abhorrent acts such as the ones which have taken place in France, the only thing which they can be attributed to is sheer barbarity and inhumanity.

But to the dismay of the overwhelming majority of peace-loving Muslims around the world, the perpetrators attribute themselves to a religion which considers them outside its

pale, for there is not even the slightest allowance for such crimes in the religion of Islam. In their deluded sense of valour and 'service' to faith, such people only counter the true teachings of Islam and play their role in tarnishing the image of a pristine religion in the view of others. As His Holiness (aba) further stated:

'The fallout from this heinous act has further exacerbated the tensions between the Islamic world and the West and between Muslims living in France and the rest of society. We consider this to be a source of deep regret and a means of further undermining the peace and stability of the world. We must all join together to root out all forms of extremism and to encourage mutual understanding and tolerance. From our perspective, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community will spare no effort in our mission to foster a better understanding of the true and peaceful teachings of Islam in the world.'

These events have stemmed from what has now become a long-standing debate of freedom of speech and expression, in lieu of the original printing of caricatures depicting the holy founder and Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (ﷺ) in 2015, and then their reprinting in recent days. Muslims are taught from a young age to love the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) more than anyone else in the world. For Muslims, these are not just words but an actual reality.

Thus, seeing their most beloved master depicted in such a heinous manner truly does injure the sentiments of Muslims to a degree beyond words. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) serves as a guide, as the perfect model who embodied the true, peaceful, beautiful teachings of Islam and established examples of how to live life in every facet and every situation.

If this is the case, and he truly was the perfect model, then surely he must have set examples of what one should do when he himself was ridiculed, attacked and abused. This begs the question; in this instance; what would Muhammad (ﷺ) do?

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) embodied the teachings of the Holy Qur'an to perfection. God Almighty states in the Holy Qur'an:

'And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice.'

Thus, no matter the enmity, hatred, vile and abuse which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) faced – indeed he faced more than any prophet in history – he always reacted in the kindest and benevolent way.

Take for example an incident of a man who wished to test the limits of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) tolerance and forbearance. He went in the presence of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to retrieve a loan, three days before it was due. This man approached the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) while he was accompanying a funeral possession, and pulled the covering of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) with such force that it fell from his shoulders. Then he began screaming at the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) demanding his loan be repaid. He verbally abused not only the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) but his family as well, saying, 'I know you, the sons of Bani Muttalib delay in repayments.'One of the Prophet's (ﷺ) most loyal and devoted companions, Hazrat Umar (ra) was standing beside his master as this took place. He was enraged and infuriated, upon seeing his beloved master being abused in such a manner and said, 'O enemy of God, how dare you treat the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) with such rudeness.' He was just about ready to attack this person, but he saw the reaction of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) – a lesson for all to this day.

Had it been permissible to resort to violence as retaliation for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) being abused, then surely he would have allowed Hazrat Umar (ra) to do so. Instead, the most Noble Prophet (ﷺ) stood there and smiled. He very calmly and gently said to Hazrat Umar (ra),
'You should have advised me to repay the loan in a goodly manner and taught him the decent manner of demanding the return of the loan. O 'Umar, now you go and repay his loan and give him some measure of dates in addition to the loan.'

Upon seeing this kind, gentle and benevolent response to his unwarranted and harsh attack against him, this man accepted the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as being the true Prophet of God and became a Muslim.
Upon being abused, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) could have allowed violent measures to be taken. Instead, he used this opportunity to exemplify and exhibit the true teachings of Islam.
On another occasion, a Bedouin ran up to the Prophet (ﷺ) and pulled his cloak with such force that it bruised his neck. Then he vehemently demanded to be given money. In this moment, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) did not instruct for this person, who had acted in such an unbecoming manner to the most beloved Prophet of God to be attacked; instead, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) remained calm, smiled, and instructed that the Bedouin should be given some money.

Hazrat Aisha (ra), wife of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) relates that there were people who would approach him and say ‘curse and destruction be upon you.’ One day, Hazrat Aisha (ra) replied in kind to these people, using the same words against them. Upon hearing this, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) advised her to speak gently and refrain from using harsh words, despite the fact that the same words were used against him.Then he went on to advise her, ‘O Aisha, gentleness, in whatever thing it is found, adds beauty to it. And whichever affair lacks leniency develops flaw and ugliness.’

Perhaps one of the most painful incidents for any Muslim to hear from the life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is that which took place in Taif. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had gone merely to promote the message of peace, love and harmony, and in return was pelted with stones to the extent that his shoes became filled with blood. Afterwards, as he sat in sorrow, an angel came to him, offering to crush the people who had abused him in such a ghastly manner between the two mountains. This was yet another opportunity for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to respond in a violent manner. But instead, he set the most pristine example. He replied saying he did not want them to be crushed; instead, he prayed for their progenies to be able to realize the true, beautiful teachings of Islam.

To those who erroneously claim to uphold the honour of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ); which one of these examples support their heinous actions? If they were true defenders of the Holy Prophet’s (ﷺ) honour, then they would react in such a peaceful benevolent manner, as the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) did. If they truly defended his honour, then they would use such opportunities to display the true teachings of Islam, just as the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) did, rather than turning people away by committing atrocities and then falsely ascribing them to the faith which they claim to follow.
Thus, it becomes absolutely clear; no matter how injured the sentiments of Muslims may be, no matter how much Muslims may love the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Islam, nor the example of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) allow for any sort of violence.

In light of these events, another point of conversation which has resurged pertains the philosophies of freedom of speech and expression. These are principles which Islam absolutely supports. In fact, early Muslims sacrificed their lives to uphold the principles of individual liberty, freedom of conscience and religion.

One of the fundamental teachings of Islam is ‘There is no compulsion in religion.’
In the words of Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), ‘What a clear and unequivocal statement in defense of freedom of thought, freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.’
However, Islam also teaches that there must be a framework in order to ensure that whilst these freedoms remain intact, everyone can live harmoniously within society.

For example, God Almighty states:

‘And revile not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, revile Allah in their ignorance.’

Islam teaches that no matter how much one’s religious sentiments may be injured, one should not respond in a like manner, otherwise the result would be what we see hap-

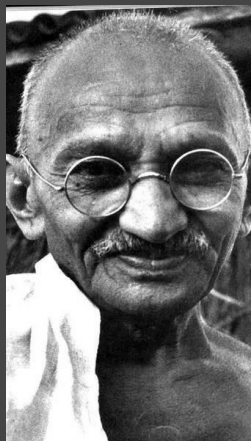
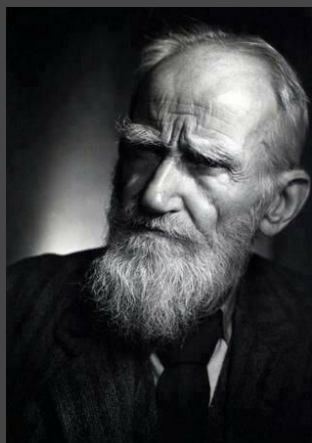
pening today; the sentiments – even the lives – of others being harmed, all in the name of free speech and expression.

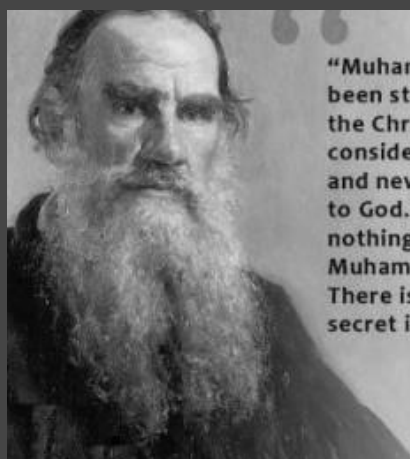
In order to maintain a harmonious society, though differing opinions may exist, the sentiments of others must be taken into account. There is no example more perfect of this, than that of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). A Muslims was quarrelling with a Jewish person who declared Moses (as) to be of higher rank than the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). They both presented the matter before the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), who beautifully replied,
'Do not give me superiority over Moses (as) and thus disrupt the peaceful atmosphere of Medina.'

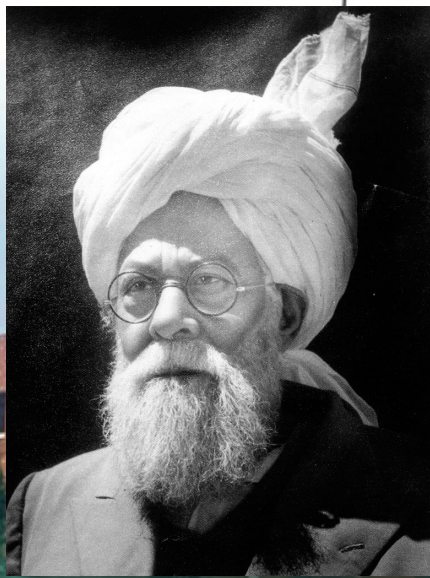
Simply put, what use is there of expressing freedom of speech, if people use its guise to hinder and eliminate the peace and harmony of societies? Thus, through his profound humility and most esteemed example, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) established this example of what true freedom of speech and expression are.

If the world can (or at least should) unite on one thing, it's that incidents such as those which have taken place in France have no place in this world.

And if Muslims' sentiments have been injured, then the blueprint of how to react is right before them. Let not a divergent few hinder or blemish the true teachings of Islam. Let them not blaspheme the pure teachings and the pristine example of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) by claiming to defend them, but acting in a manner which completely contradicts them. Instead, let them use such occasions to show the world what the true teachings of Islam are, as His Holiness (aba) states,

'It is up to Muslims to stand up and reject all forms of extremism and terrorism. Wherever and whenever such attacks take place they must be condemned in the strongest possible terms… It is the task of Ahmadi Muslims to show the true teachings of Islam which are of peace love, mercy and compassion.'

I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life. **"Mahatma Gandhi, statement published in 'Young India,'1924."**

Who is
muhammad?

George Bernard Shaw said about him: "He must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much-needed peace and happiness". (The Genuine Islam, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 8, 1936)

"Muhammad has always been standing higher than the Christianity. He does not consider god as a human being and never makes himself equal to God. Muslims worship nothing except God and Muhammad is his Messenger. There is not any mystery and secret in it"

Leo Tolstoy

TAHRIK-E-JADID:

THE MAGNUM OPUS OF HAZRAT MUSLEH-E-MAUD (RA)

By: Atta ul Haye Nasir, UK
Originally published in Al Hakam

Attempts have always been made to efface divine communities from the face of the earth. Opponents with such intentions, however, are unaware that God Almighty has promised the domination of His divine communities. The support of God Almighty openly declares:

أُولٰٓئِکَ حِزۡبُ اللّٰہِ ؕ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ حِزۡبَ اللّٰہِ ہُمُ الۡمُفۡلِحُوۡنَ

"They are Allah's party. Hearken ye [O people]! It is Allah's party who will be successful."* *(Surah al-Mujadalah, Ch.58: V.23)

In the time of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra), many trials and tribulations arose and opponents tried their utmost to wipe out Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya. But Huzoor (ra) bravely resisted every tribulation that arose, and every plot of the enemy ultimately proved futile. Ahmadiyyat continues to progress to this day, alhamdolillah, and will continue to do so, insha–Allah.

One of these tribulations which arose on a large scale was in 1934 in the shape of the Majlis-i-Ahrar. Muslims were incensed about the existence of the Jamaat. It was as if the whole country had begun to support the Ahrar. These people gathered to hold a meeting and rose up with the determination of destroying Qadian and wiping out Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya. At that time, this attempt was in full swing.

During these turbulent times, Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud (ra), after receiving divine guidance, announced a scheme, Tahrik-e-Jadid. This heavenly scheme was revealed to Huzoor (ra) in such a way that all the stages of this spiritual conquest became visible to him. Thus, Huzoor (ra) was able to write up a comprehensive plan of action for the spiritual battle between truth and falsehood.

Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud (ra) could have announced this scheme all at once, but instead, before announcing the scheme, he built an atmosphere that would instil a spirit of sacrifice in all members of the Jamaat and help them realise the importance of this scheme. Therefore, he gradually made the announcement of Tahrik-e-Jadid.

During the days of the Ahrar Tabligh Conference of October 1934, Allah the Almighty guided Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud (ra) to initiate the scheme of Tahrik-e-Jadid.

Huzoor (ra) could easily have announced this scheme before the start of the Ahrar Conference, but with great patience and wisdom, in his Friday Sermon of 19 October 1934 (just two days before the start of the Ahrar conference) Huzoor (ra) stated:

"Provided that God gives me life and strength, in a week's time, I will be making a very important announcement for the attention of the Jamaat. I do not consider it appropriate to make this announcement before the said time."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 277)

Due to the fact that Huzoor (ra) was going to announce a scheme which demanded many sacrifices from the Jamaat, so, to instil a spirit of sacrifice in the members, Huzoor (ra) reminded them of their pledge of allegiance and explained to them the true meanings of Bai'at. He stated:

"I will explain the need and reasons for this announcement later, but before that, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that you are called Ahmadis; you claim that you are the chosen Jamaat of God Almighty; you claim that you have absolute faith in the ma'mur of God Almighty; you claim that you have agreed to sacrifice your lives and properties for God; you claim that in return for all these sacrifices, you have made a bargain for Paradise with Allah the Almighty.

"You have repeated this claim at my hand; in fact, thousands of you have made this pledge at my hand because you became Ahmadis in my time.

"In the Holy Quran, Allah says that if your father, your sons, your wives, your loved ones, your properties and your possessions are dearer to you than God and His Messenger, then there is no truth in your faith. This is not a trivial declaration, but a declaration of war for every human being who has the slightest weakness in his faith. This will be a declaration of war for every person who has any shred of hypocrisy left in their heart, but I believe that all the members of our Jamaat, illaa Masha-Allah [with the exception of what Allah knows], are true believers and are firm in their pledge, which they made at the time of Bai'at; they will always be ready to make whatever sacrifice is asked of them in accordance with this pledge."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 277)

After this, addressing the audience, Huzoor (ra) stated:

"It is forbidden to speak during the Friday Sermon, but a person can speak if the imam gives permission. So I ask you, are you firm upon the pledge that you made to me?" (Ibid)
Huzoor's (ra) question was answered in the affirmative by the audience and cries of "labbaik" were heard from all corners.

Huzoor (ra) then said to Jamaat members:

"After this, I advise you that when you have sold your lives to me, sold your possessions to me, then I can ask anything of you that is within the boundaries of the Shariah. It is the duty of every member of the Jamaat to fulfil every demand that I make keeping within the Shariah and if anyone does not fulfill this, then such a one is a hypocrite and not an Ahmadi." (Ibid)
After this, referring to the jalsa of the Ahrar, which was scheduled for a few days later, Huzoor (ra) said:

"The first thing I ask of you (the second demand will be made after the first is achieved) is in relation to a jalsa [conference] that will take place here soon. I have received certain information about this conference that the people [associated with the event] want to cause rioting and disorder."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 278)

Advising the Jamaat in this regard, Huzoor (ra) said:

"I instruct every member of my Jamaat not to raise their hand against anyone, even if they are beaten, and not to open their mouth. Even if they are about to be murdered, they do not have the right to lift their hand or open their mouth ... after this announcement, you will be tested and it will be known to what extent you are ready to sacrifice your lives for religion.
"After this, I will make the second demand and see to what extent you fulfil it, but I do not want to make that demand during the days of the Ahrari Jalsa lest it be considered a reaction

or it opens another door for disorder. Thereafter, I will see how many of you are ready for this sacrifice.

"The sacrifices made by our Jamaat thus far are significantly less when compared to the sacrifices of Prophet Moses' (as) jamaat, or Jesus' (as) disciples, or the Holy Prophet's (sa) Companions (ra). But now, it is time for us to make sacrifices in a way that shows us its fruits and takes us to those heights for which the Promised Messiah (as) was sent to the world."
(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 278-279)

Huzoor (ra) further said:

"It is my hope that if you are ordered to go to distant countries without a single penny, you will comply with the order and if you are demanded to make changes in your eating habits or dress, you will comply with it. If you must devote your time entirely for the service of the Jamaat, [it is my hope that] you will agree to it without making any excuses. The one who does not fulfil these demands will not be considered from us and will be considered detached."
(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 279)

Then, in his Friday sermon of 26 October 1934, Huzoor (ra) said:

"In the previous sermon, I instructed the Jamaat to be patient and advised people not to walk around with sticks and to obey all the orders given by representatives of the British government.

"Before today's sermon, I would like to thank you and express my gratitude to you for your patience in spite of the provocative acts [of the opponents]. Save a few incidents which may have occurred due to misunderstanding, there was nothing else that could be considered a source of embarrassment for me and a problem for them."
(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 282)

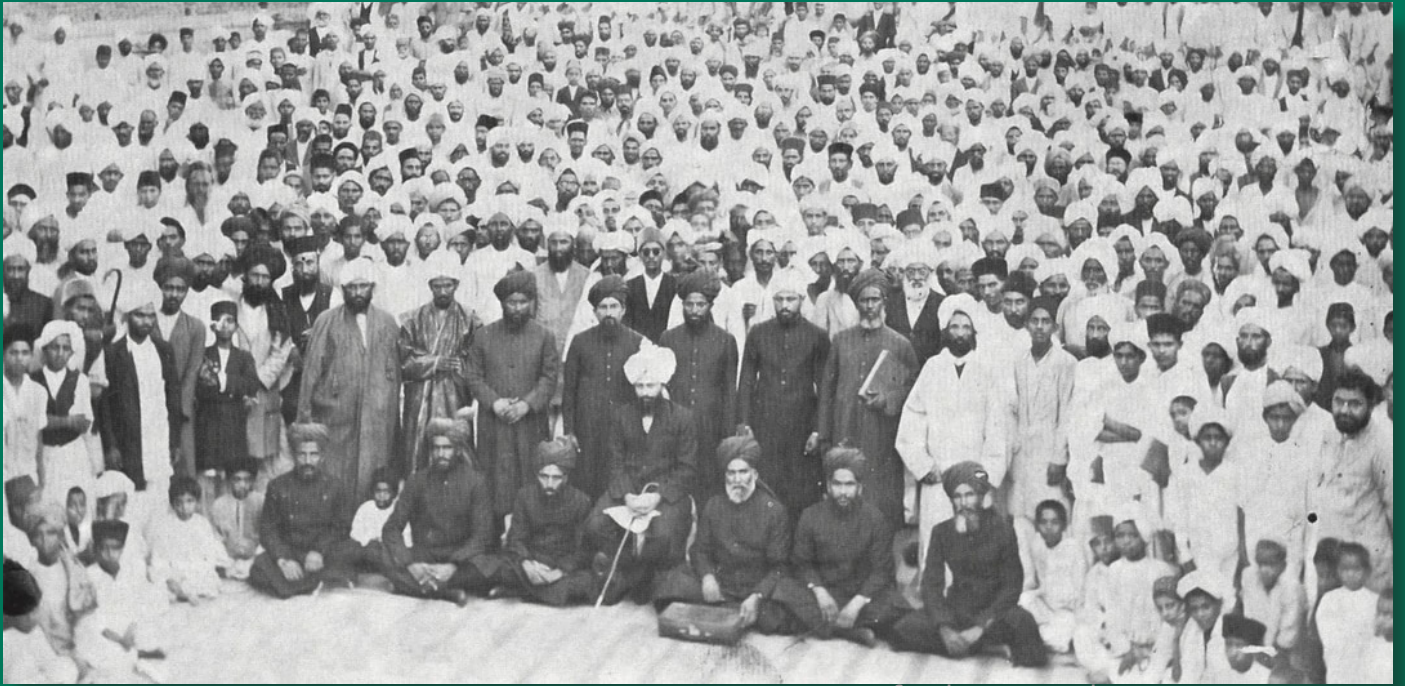
Huzoor (ra) then went on to inform members of the Jamaat in detail about the tense situation created by the Ahrar.
He stated that in this provocative situation, the conduct of police officers was very commendable. They felt bad when they heard those words which were used for Jamaat members during the Jalsa. A few of these officers met me as well and agreed that Ahmadis were harmed without any reason. They expressed that a Jalsa for the sole purpose of slander and mockery should not have been held.

Huzoor (ra) further stated that he himself read in a newspaper that the Chair person of the conference said, "Put me in a room with Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud (ra) and if he is still alive the next morning, then you can say what you please [about me]."
Huzoor (ra) stated:

"Any magistrate who has an ounce of decency cannot say that this was not a provocative act. Is this not a clear murder threat? ... We know that prophets and their jamaats are threatened like this." (Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol.15, p. 284)

Then Huzoor (ra) stated that he would now commence with the subject which he mentioned in the previous sermon, but it was also necessary to narrate the entire situation to the officers, members of the Jamaat, the public and those who are expressing so much contempt for us.

Huzoor (ra) said that a believer never does anything in secrecy and whatever he would do, he would announce it publicly.
Before proceeding with the subject, Huzoor (ra) said:

"You should remember two things: Firstly, every person who is in the Jamaat – who has pledged allegiance, through me, to the Promised Messiah (as), through whom [they have pledged allegiance] to the Holy Prophet (sa),

through whom [they have pledged allegiance] to God Almighty – has agreed to sacrifice their life, wealth, honour, dignity, children, property, in fact, everything, for the sake of God, the Messenger (saw) and his representatives and now, nothing is their own.

"I would like to make it clear that if there is even the slightest of doubts about these meanings [of Bai'at] in anyone's heart, they should renounce their allegiance if they do not wish to be called a hypocrite ... If anyone thinks that they have pledged conditional allegiance to me and that they still possess something they can call their own and my obedience is conditional to them, then such people are not in my allegiance.

"I would like to say clearly to you and the millions of people who live in different parts of the world and those who will read it in the newspapers (when this sermon is published), that if there is any indifference left in one's heart, I do not consider them in my Bai'at ... God is my Witness that you are completely convinced that I have conveyed to you that a conditional Bai'at is not a [true] Bai'at at all. [True] Bai'at is that in which one is ready to sacrifice everything. It is your duty to obey my every command which is in line with the commandments of God Almighty and about which there is no contradicting guidance."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 285-286)

Huzoor (ra) further stated:

"You must remember that this is a very critical time for us. There is opposition from all sides and it is your duty to uphold the dignity of the Jamaat while confronting it.

"Once, in a private meeting, at the house of Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan, Chaudhry Afzal Haq Sahib told me that their aim was to crush the Ahmadiyya Jamaat. So, the enemies have challenged us.

"So long as blood courses through your veins, it is your duty to accept this challenge and break the strength of this group that is threatening us. Tell the world that you can raze mountains to the ground, you can dry up the oceans and through lawful means, you can defeat anyone who stands up to destroy you, with the help of God, no matter how powerful the opponent may be ... We must accept this challenge ...

"As some people of the Punjab government have slandered the Jamaat and there is the challenge of the Ahrar as well, it is your job to elucidate this defamation and respond to their challenge. And for these two things, make whatever sacrifices you must make.

"For this, I will ask of you such sacrifices that have never been demanded before. They may seem trivial at first, but they will increase later. Ahmadis from all corners of the world should be ready for this and immediately say 'Labbaik' when the call comes."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 287-288)

After this, Huzoor (ra) narrated more details about the ongoing situation.
Then, referring to a revelation of the Promised Messiah (as), he said:

"O Ahmadiyya Jamaat, as it has been told about the Promised Messiah (as) that he would create a new earth and a new heaven, it is your duty to build a house for yourself with the grace of God. This revelation indicates that this earth and the heaven will cut you off like thorns."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 311)

Then in his Friday Sermon of 2 November 1934, Huzoor (ra) elaborated on the tribulations created by the Ahrar against the Jamaat and the unjust attitudes of some government officials. Due to misunderstandings and conspiratorial activities of the Ahrar, Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya (and especially Huzoor (ra)) was falsely accused of civil disobedience and rebellion. In response to these allegations, Huzoor (ra) said:

"Some close friends who have friendly ties with the government have also urged me to postpone my special announcement until we try to eradicate these misunderstandings, which have occurred between us and some government officials. If we have ever misunderstood something, as we are a religious group, we have always admitted our mistakes openly.
"I can assure these friends that if any mistake in our actions or misunderstanding is proven, we are always ready to face the punishment and apologise for it.

"It is now a question of whether the government is willing to admit its mistake or not. If it is proved that the government has made a mistake and it admits its mistake, then our grievances can be removed. The believer never keeps resentment or anger in his heart, but seeks the betterment of mankind … We want to raise this question only because if this issue is not raised, many problems will arise for us in the future and there is a danger of compromising the peace of the country. Otherwise, what is the significance of what the government has said, in the face of the abuse that we hear from our opponents on a daily basis? It is the government's fault that it has attributed someone else's actions to me …
"Why can we not tolerate this mistake of the government? The reason is the same as I mentioned earlier, that issuing such a notice by the government, in which we are accused of civil disobedience, is not valid in any case. Our Jamaat is that Jamaat, about which people have been saying from the beginning that it is a flatterer of the government. Some people accuse us of being government's spies … There has never been a time when we have not even been accused of being rebels against the government.
"From the time when the Promised Messiah (as) announced his claims, the disbelieving maulvis and especially Maulvi Muhammad Hussain Sahib Batalvi started telling the government not to fall for our praise as we were not supporters of the government but rebels. And if not today, then tomorrow, they will stand against the government with swords.
"Thus, from the earliest days of the claim of the Promised Messiah (as), people have been saying that we are rebels against the government and now, in the speeches made by the Ahraris in Qadian and Amritsar, they have said the same thing, that people should not fall for what we say as we are actually against the government.

"Such people should read the newspaper Zamindar and see that it openly declares us not to be friends of the government and that in fact, we are opponents behind the curtain. Today, if the government declares us rebels, then it is nothing of a new allegation that will make us angry …

"We object to this act of the government because it [the government] represents the [English] monarch, who the Promised Messiah (as) was always proud of being loyal to. It was under this government that he felt proud to live and we have always been proud of our loyalty for this government …
"If peaceful, loyal citizens and servants of the country are declared guilty of such disobedience … then, we fear that this chaos will continue to grow … If an appeal had been allowed in this case, I would not have been so disappointed as I intended to appeal to the High Court to protect the honour of the Jamaat … But the law under which I have been declared

a rebel and dissident of the government, without any reason, has not left any room for appeal to the High Court."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 313-318)

Then, referring to his personal feelings regarding loyalty to the government of the time, Huzoor (ra) said:

"I know what feelings I have in my heart for this great country. I know what my thoughts are on loyalty and obedience to the government ... We have always been loyal citizens of this great country. Peace and obedience is the teaching of our religion and even the thought of civil disobedience has never crossed our minds and it never can because our religious teachings prevent it ...

"I am sorry to say that some government officials have made a mistake and think that perhaps I am going to start a movement similar to the Non-Cooperation Movement. On the other hand, some people in the Jamaat have not understood my scheme. But some have understood it wonderfully, to the extent that they have written letters to me and summed up my scheme in a few words. But some members have presented such suggestions that cannot be right in any case. For example, a person wrote that 'we should start wearing khaddar [khadi]'. that no doubt if we boycott the English wearings, we can save 1.5 million rupees per annum to England, and if we work together with the Congress, the scheme of boycotting the English items can be so much successful. But this act is against our teachings, that we boycott someone who is not guilty. Even though, through this, we can bring the attention of England towards our rights, but as it is not allowed for us religiously, this act is fully inappropriate. Moreover, it is against the logic, to hit the people of Lancashire with a stick, for a mistake of an officer of Punjab."

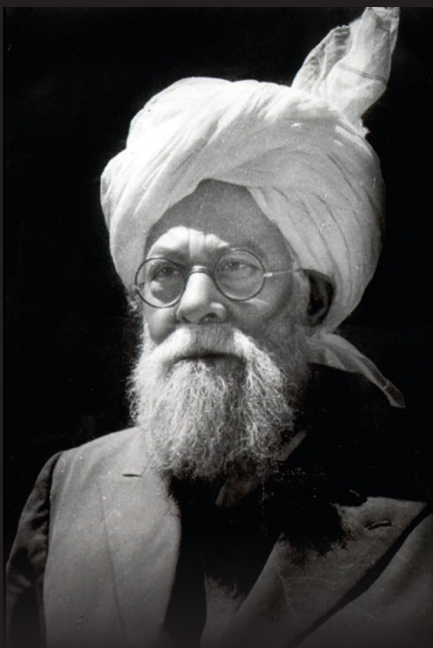
(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, vol. 15, pp. 318-320)

Later in the same sermon, Huzoor (ra) narrated some incidents which raised suspicions that perhaps someone from the Punjab government wanted to harm the Jamaat and was trying to defame it. After narrating these incidents, Huzoor (ra) said:

"Next week, insha–Allah, I will present to the Jamaat the suggestions I have thought. This week, I wanted to make the chapters outside [of Qadian] alert because there are very few outsiders who are aware of the situation in Qadian. In the same vein, women think that they may not have to join this scheme, so I also want to say that women should also join and this sacrifice is required not only from men, but women as well."

(Khutbat-e-Mahmud, Vol. 15, pp. 360)

O CHILDREN OF THE COMMUNITY, I NEED TO SAY SOMETHING

Published in Al-Hakam, October 17, 1920

O children of the community, I have something to say,
But the condition is that my message should not be lost.
I want to give you a few words of advice
So that no blame falls upon me later on.
When we have passed away, the entire burden would fall upon you
Give up your slothfulness—do not become seekers of comfort.
Consider the service of Faith as a blessing from God;
Never be the seeker of recompense in exchange for it.
There should be passion in the heart; the eyes should be shedding tears
You should possess the spirit of Islam—not just the name.
There should be no pride in the head—no fire of wrath in the eyes
There should be no malice in the heart—no abuses upon the lips.
Well-wishing of the friends should be kept as an objective
Do not find faults—do not be a mischief-maker or calumniator.
Give up avarice—develop piety and contentment
Wealth should not become beloved; silver should not become sweetheart.
Be duteous unto Prayers and Fasts with the inclination of the heart
No part of the injunctions should be overlooked.
If you have wealth, then pay the zakāt and alms from it
You should have concern for the poor—not worry for worldly affairs.

Our

GOD

Proving the existence of God by rational means

THE PLIGHT OF FAITH IN THE PRESENT AGE

BY: MIRZA BASHIR AHMAD, M.A.

First of all, I want to express extreme regret at the belief in God held in common by some people in this age. On the face of it, all religions of the world believe in the existence of God. Their followers profess the same faith, except for an insignificant minority which openly denies His existence. But when we carefully examine the situation, we find that belief in God is based on form rather than substance. People have inherited this belief from their ancestors and feel obliged to adhere—albeit ostensibly—to the fundamentals of their religions. They do not want to abandon it lest society disintegrates but, in their heart of hearts, they do feel that God may indeed exist. For these reasons they dare not deny His existence and believe that they have a God. But in reality they do not believe in God and their hearts are as devoid of faith as a deserted house is of inhabitants. This is not only true of some particular country or religion; it is rather true of all religions and of the entire world. The poison of disbelief has penetrated deep into the followers of all religions: be they Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, or Muslims, etc. The searing and noxious winds of materialism have reduced every orchard of faith to ashes. If anyone seeks verity of this claim, I can adduce such evidence that cannot be denied by any fair-minded person. To those who doubt it, I will ask just one question: After analysing the state of their own hearts and of

their fellows, can they honestly say that they all truly believe in God? I speak not of superficial or inherited ritual, but of true and living faith. Do they feel and experience the existence of God as they feel and experience the material and tangible things of this world? Are they as certain about the existence of God as they are about the existence of the sun, the moon, the mountains, the rivers, their houses, their ancestors, and their friends? If not, then understand it well that we cannot consider their faith to be true. They are not in the least certain about the existence of God, and can be likened to those who hold on to a zombie imagining it to be alive. If they say that the faith and conditions of faith I have mentioned above are of the highest possible level and that only the elect of God are blessed with such a lofty station, their statement would lend further proof of their ignorance, for they know nothing of the highest level of faith and can hardly begin to appreciate it. The fact is that this level of faith—whereby one believes in God just as one believes in material objects of this world—is only a middle level of faith. Have you not read the Tradition in which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has said that a believer with the average level of faith would prefer to be burnt to ashes rather than abandon his creed? But if one finds himself at the lower level of faith, then let me ask: Can you honestly say that your faith influences your life as a living truth in reality? Do you really feel the love of God and fear of His wrath in your heart? Does your faith induce you to do good and to discard evil? Do you truly put your trust in God, in all things, rather than in material means? I do not mean to ask whether or not you sometimes feel any relationship with God or whether thinking about Him, prevents you from evil because such a condition could even be true of a person who has insight enough not to deny the existence of God. Every now and then, the idea occurs to him that God, Who has created him and controls the universe, may indeed exist and that some day he may have to be answerable to Him. Of course, such a person would feel a certain association with the idol of an imaginary god, and this thought may at times stop him from sin and urge him to do good, and he might at times manage to look beyond the material things towards God and feel that real trust can only be placed in Him. But such a state cannot be called true faith, rather it is a state of doubt which keeps him swaying like a pendulum. It can only be called true faith when it becomes a permanent part of one's life and takes root in one's heart as an eternal truth. It should become the food for his soul and a beacon to warn him of all the dark alleys of sin. Through such faith the paths of righteousness are illuminated for him and all material things lose their significance. He no longer depends on material means but places his real trust in God—the ultimate Cause of all causes. The fire of Divine love continues to blaze in his heart, and the fear of earning His displeasure overwhelms his entire being. Do you really find such faith in your hearts? If not—and that is most likely to be the case—then please do not claim yourselves as believers. Seek true faith which descends from heaven and lights up the farthest and darkest recesses of the heart like a powerful lamp instead. When this happens, God shall cease to be a figment of your imaginations and shall reveal Himself in His true form, as a Living, Self-Subsisting and Omnipotent Sovereign, Who is Loving and Kind. His Kingdom shall become far more evident and manifest than that of earthly monarchs. True faith, in short, is conspicuous by its absence in the present age. Not only is it absent from the hearts of the masses, but those who profess to be the leaders of religion and claim to be custodians of people's faith have themselves fallen prey to atheism. They either deceive the world or are themselves deceived. Their lips profess but their hearts are empty. When it comes to spirituality, the world has indeed fallen into an abyss of darkness and there is not the tiniest, flicker to guide a staggering and stumbling wayfarer. Is it not the demand of the age that in keeping with God's eternal practice, the Sun of His Manifestation should rise from the heart of a holy person and illuminate the world? My dear people! Prostrate yourselves before the Divine threshold, for God has seen your plight and has raised a Spiritual Sun from the Eastern horizon. Open the windows of your hearts and let the pure rays of this Sun dispel the darkness of doubt and suspicions, so that the night of darkness may turn into a bright day!

(Our God - Page 3-7)

MAULANA KARAM ILAHI ZAFAR SAHIB

By Farukh Ahmed Arshad
Missionary currently serving in Central Waqf-e-Nau Department London

The history of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Spain can be traced back to the 1930s, when during the era of the Second Khilafat of Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad Sahib (ra); Malik Mohammad Sharid Gujrati Sahib arrived in Madrid on March 10th, 1936.

A Community consisting of five Ahmadi Muslims was said to have been established, among whom the first convert was Count Antonio Logothete. He later adopted the name Ghulam Ahmad. His wife adopted the name Amina. However, in the same year the Spanish Civil War broke out between the Republicans, the Second Spanish Republic, and the Nationalists. As a consequence of the state of anarchy which had been created, Malik Mohammad Sharid Gujrati Sahib was forced to leave the country and the Community became dormant.

Several years after the Civil War, missionary efforts commenced once again and in 1945 Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad (ra), Khalifatul Masih II organized the first group of missionaries to spread Islam in Europe, the name of Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib, was not among them. Invaded by great sadness, Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib went to the Minara-tul-Masih of the Aqsa Mosque in Qadian to fervently implore God to relieve him of the regret of being deprived of the blessings that other companions had received and for God to also give him the opportunity to serve Islam. But he was completely surprised when, on

his return, his companions congratulated him because, during his absence, Hazur had appointed him as a missionary for Spain.
Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar sahib was born on December 31st, 1919, in Banga, Hoshiarpur province, India. He studied at Talim-ul-Islam High School in Qadian, India.
The caravan departed in 1945 from Qadian towards Bombay harbour, via New Delhi. The group embarked on SS Batory and after three weeks landed in Liverpool where they confronted Jalal al-Din Shams Sahib, then a pioneering missionary stationed in England. The caravan spent six months in London at the Fazl Mosque. On June 24th, 1946 Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib arrived in Madrid through the French port of Hendaye.
Upon arrival to Spain after the Civil War, the country was immersed in a serious economic crisis. It was a time of great religious censorship, as non-Catholic doctrines had been banned by the government. For this reason, during his life he faced great difficulties in his preaching work, including arrests on several occasions. His preaching work produced discomfort in the Spanish high spheres to the point of wanting his expulsion from the country, which, with the grace of God, did not happen.

Zafar Sahib studied Spanish for six months before he was able to preach to the people of Spain. A noted early convert of this period was Enrique Ku Zhin, an ethnic Russian translator who adopted the name Muhammad Ahmad.

Within a year of his assignment to Spain, the Head Quarters of the Jama'at had to reallocate from Qadian, India to the newly established land of Rabwah in Pakistan after the Split of the sub-continent. Due to this reason Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) decided to temporarily close down some missions in Europe, due to lack of financial means. This meant that Spain was also in the list of the missions which could no longer be financially supported by the centre.

Faced with this problem and the great passion of tabligh, Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib, suggested to Hazoor (ra) the idea of seeking their own means of subsistence and proposed making perfumes. Huzoor (ra) upon hearing of this idea, agreed and approved his suggestion. Thus, Maulana Sahib learned the art of perfumery.

After receiving permission from the caliph, Zafar Sahib worked as a street vendor selling homemade perfumes for around thirty five years, primarily in El Rastro, a market in Madrid. He often used his stalls as opportunity to introduce the Islamic faith. he reportedly used to chant,

"Huelan esta fragancia tan agradable, sin embargo esta fragancia no durará mucho tiempo entre vosotros, pero yo conozco un aroma que es permanente y eterno. Si lo desean, pueden tomar mi tarjeta y contactarme", *(Wikipedia)*

That is to say; "The pleasant fragrance that I am selling does not last long, but there is a scent that is permanent and eternal, i.e.

Islamic teachings, If you wish, you can take my card and contact me".

Under the rule of Francisco Franco, non-Catholic missionary work was banned and as a result Zafar Sahib faced several arrests by the state police. Often his perfume stall was subject to vandalism from members of the general public. In spite of this, he managed to publish a number of books into Spanish during the Franco era, including Estructura económica de la sociedad islámica (Islamic Economic system) and La filosofía de las enseñanzas del islam a translation of a book by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam.

God blessed the perfume business that in 1948 the book "The road to Peace" written by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) was published. Although this book was widely accepted, the Spanish government was not willing to allow its circulation. However, Christian priests somehow persuaded the authorities not to censor it, claiming that it was anti-communist and therefore in the interests of Spain. Thus, its publication was finally authorized and its dissemination obtained multiple samples of acceptance and recognition.

Then the opportunity arose to publish the book "Las tenanzas del Islam", which was also paid for through the sale of perfumes. However, the government prohibited its dissemination due to protests from the Catholic Church, all copies being confiscated. After several attempts, they managed to recover and were sent to London together with a list of names and from there they were sent to Spanish intellectuals and personalities.

After several attempts to lift the censorship, a copy was sent to General Franco. The General greatly appreciated the reading and wrote a letter expressing his appreciation. This letter opened the doors for their free movement and helped in the continuous police searches.

He organized weekly talks at the Mission, where different groups of people congregated. Cultural centres, universities, and schools were also important points of contact with the public, through lectures and talks on the Islamic religion. Throughout his life, he made the message of Islam known in private audiences to authorities, personalities and intellectuals of Spanish society, including Her Majesty Queen Sofia and Prince Felipe of Spain.

He promoted the construction of the Basharat Mosque in Pedro Abad, Córdoba, which is the first mosque built in Spain after almost eight centuries. On October 9th, 1980, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (ra) came to Spain to lay the first stone.

On September 10th, 1982, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV (rh), inaugurated the Basharat Mosque in a solemn act in which delegations from all over the world participated. It was an important day for the history of Islam in Spain and in the world.

After the inauguration of the Basharat Mosque, in December 1982, Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib was assigned to Granada to open a new mission in that city. He stayed there for five years and during that time Islam spread in that city through talks, lectures, book fairs, leaflet distribution, and other means.

In 1987, he was appointed a missionary to Portugal. In this country he served as a missionary for nine years. During this time, a Community Centre was bought in Lisbon and the Ahmadiyya message was spread throughout the Portuguese territory.

In 1990, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh), on the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the Ahmadiyya Community, made an official visit to this country to inaugurate the mission of Portugal. This visit of Hazoor (rh) was received by all the authorities of the country who welcomed him.

Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib passed away in Granada, Spain, on August 12th, 1996, after 50 years of incessant preaching. He is buried in the Pedro Abad Cemetery, Córdoba, near the Basharat Mosque, and his name was inscribed in the Bahisti Maqbara of Rabwah, India.

Maulana Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib won the hearts of all who knew him thanks to the message that he spread everywhere. He was a person totally consecrated to God. He did not miss any opportunity to spread the message of Islam and kept his promise until the last days of his life. He was always very God fearing. He spent most of his time in remembrance of God. He was noted for his devotion to the Jama'at and for his obedience to his Khulafa.

He was simple, open and friendly, yet he had an imposing personality. He was a very patient and tolerant person, but he could not bear anything that was against his religion. He liked the simple life but he was very generous with others.

May Allah enable us to follow the examples of such people and try to implement their characteristics in our lives, Ameen.

A New Year's celebration:
prayer, charity and good-will to all

By: Zafir Malik

originally published in the review of religions - january 2020

Dawn broke today over the picturesque Mubarak Mosque in Surrey as nearly 1500 hundred men, women and children prepared to go home after performing the tahajjud– pre-dawn voluntary prayers and the fajr prayers . This was not an isolated event – indeed throughout the world thousands of Muslims woke up to start the New Year offering prayers in their local mosques or own homes. Muslims are not alone in beginning the New Year with prayers, as do many other religious groups . But while other religions may make a point of marking such occasions, for a Muslim, this is just another day.

Indeed, some may choose to celebrate by spending New Year's eve drinking and making merry. However, the Qur'an instructs that the life of a Muslim has two objectives: to fulfil the rights of God, and to fulfil the rights of mankind. So, at every occasion including New Year's Day, Ahmadi Muslims will seek the opportunity to fulfil their duties in both. That is why, before 5am on New Year's morning, worshippers, men women and children, descended on Islamabad, Tilford in the Surrey countryside to offer voluntary prayers.

As for the second command, hundreds of Ahmadi youth across the UK and in other countries, will today head to their local town centres and carry out the famous "New Year's Clean Up" by voluntarily helping clean up streets across the country. This way they will ensure that they begin the year by fulfilling these two vital tenets of their faith

Where do these youths get their inspiration from? Humans are impressionable and often look to other people or other things for inspiration. For Ahmadi youths, there is one person who lives and breathes these two commandments every moment of his life. He is the Caliph – Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (May Allah be his Helper)– Spiritual Guide to Millions of Ahmadi Muslims across the world. His guidance on New Year celebrations, is that this is a time to self -reflect on what was one's spiritual growth in the last year. The year must begin with a new resolve for spiritual growth and the best way to begin a year is to bow in prostration to our God. This instruction is beautifully illustrated by an incident reported by the fourth Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, prior to becoming Caliph.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) stated: 'Once I was in the UK for New Years Eve. Countless people had gathered at Trafalgar square; on this night, people are usually engulfed in all sorts of indecent acts and as soon as the clock strikes midnight, they think they are free to do anything they please, losing all sense of morality and religious obligations. That night, by chance I happened to be at Euston Station. So I decided to offer nawaafil– voluntary prayers – which was nothing special on my part, as by the Grace of Allah the Almighty, the majority of Ahmadis begin the New Year in the same manner. I laid out a newspaper to offer my prayers. After a few minutes, I felt as if someone was standing beside me. I had not yet completed my prayers when I heard someone weeping. Upon completing my prayers, I saw an elderly English gentlemen crying profusely. I became deeply concerned and thought that perhaps he was sympathising with me, thinking that maybe I had gone mad. So I asked what was the matter with him? He replied: "There is nothing wrong with me, but my people have lost their senses. At this time, my people are engrossed in all sorts of immoral acts and there is only one person who is remembering their Lord. This thought had such a profound effect on my heart that I was unable to hold back my tears." He then repeatedly said the words: "God bless you, God bless you." Thus, even if the entire world mocks at us, an Ahmadi youth should not care one bit, for he has every right to exercise his freedom and is answerable to God Almighty alone.'

His Holiness leading the first dawn prayers of 2020 at the Mubarak Mosque, Tilford, Surrey
©Makhzan-e-Tasaweer

CORONAVIRUS — PURSUIT FOR A CURE

BY: MALEEHA QAZI, PHD | MD CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, CANADA

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

In December 2019, the first cases of patients with pneumonia-like viral illness were identified in Wuhan, China. Subsequently, a novel human-infecting coronavirus (termed SARS-CoV-2) was identified as the causative agent for the illness. Since then 210 countries and territories have reported cases of COVID-19 (COronaVIrus Disease-2019), with global cases topping 4 million and close to 300,000 confirmed deaths (WHO COVID-19 Situation Report – 112, 11th May 2020). With the COVID-19 pandemic raging across the globe, multiple avenues of treatments are being developed and tested for efficacy against SARS-CoV-2 pathogen. As of yet, there are no universal cures against COVID-19 and the search for an effective vaccine still continues.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the official name assigned by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus. SARS-CoV-2 belongs to a large family of viruses called coronaviruses that are believed to have been originated in bats. Through genetic mutations, these viruses are thought to have spilled over from bats to other animals, and subsequently mutated further to infect humans. Over the past 20 years, two such coronaviruses have caused highly pathogenic outbreaks in humans: 2002 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak caused by SARS-CoV and 2012 Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) outbreak caused by MERS-CoV.

SARS CoV-2,like its predecessors, infects human cells found in the respiratory systems, leading to common symptoms like fever, cough, and shortness of breath. However, in severe cases, the disease progresses to pneumonia and multi-organ failure, ultimately leading to death. The rapid spread of the SARS CoV-2 is what has set it apart from other coronaviruses, leaving nations across the world scrambling for ways to reduce its transmission. Furthermore, there are no known treatments to either prevent or treat the disease, with disease management limited to supportive care. As we all watch the pandemic affecting people close to us, we are left to wonder when a treatment will become available to cure us of this disease?

Disease and its cure – the Islamic perspective

The Holy Qur'an explains that Allah the Almighty is the source of health for those who are sick as Prophet Abraham (as) told his people, 'And when I am ill, it is He Who restores me to health' (Holy Quran, 26:81). This injunction is further corroborated by a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) as is narrated by Abu Hurairah (ra), 'There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment.' (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5678, Book 76, Hadith 1). While human effort result in the discovery of new treatments for diseases, it is Allah the Almighty in His infinite compassion and grace Who has given mankind the intellect to support these endeavours and He guides those who seek them to fulfilment. Allah's compassion for His creation provides hope that while the situation maybe dire, He will provide the necessary cures. Though, human effort is indeed needed which is channeled towards research efforts that attempt to better understand human diseases and use that knowledge in the development of treatments. The Fifth Caliph and worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) clarified the purpose of these efforts in his message to students conducting research during his 2016 tour of Germany, 'Every person is going to die one day, however it is very important that we use our brains to try and find cures for the illness and ailments that cause so much suffering and to try and improve the quality of people's lives. This is the essence and true spirit with which research should be conducted.' (From 'A Personal Account' by Abid Khan — Huzoor'saa tour of Germany 27th Aug – 10th Sept 2016 — Part 1, under 'Student classes with Huzoor (aba) page 20-21).
With this hope that a cure, God willing, will be found, we relate some of the efforts that are being performed around the world for curing COVID-19. Furthermore, millions around the world are praying for the success of these scientists — it is this combination of effort and prayer that attracts the mercy of Allah.

Repurposing Drugs

Although a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 will serve as the most effective strategy for long-term infection control, repurposing of drugs designed to treat other conditions may offer quicker solutions to control the pandemic. While the treatment landscape for SARS-CoV-2 is rapidly evolving, a number of candidate therapies are already being evaluated in human patients by both government-funded organizations (for example NIH in USA, NIHR in UK, and CIHR in Canada) and pharmaceutical companies. Here we describe some of the current therapies being tested for the treatment of SARS-CoV-2 and detail the absolute need for a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 to control the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chloroquine

One of the promising agents touted widely in the media is the use of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine for the treatment of COVID-19. These two drugs are most commonly used for treating malaria and autoimmune conditions, including lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. While malaria (caused by a single celled Plasmodium) is biologically very different to coronavirus, the drugs have different effects on human cells which can disrupt the ability of pathogens to infect cells and also limit their ability to replicate. Hydroxychloroquine was first tested as a possible treatment against coronavirus infection back in 2002, after the emergence of SARS outbreak. At that time, the drug was only tested in laboratory cell cultures and no randomized control studies were conducted in actual patients.

Similar to its effects against SARS-CoV, chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine has now also shown promise against SARS-CoV-2 in laboratory settings. Early clinical studies seemed to suggest it could be quite effective in patients infected with SARS-CoV-2, which created much enthusiasm that it could be used as a treatment for COVID-19 patients. These were preliminary observational studies and were not the high-quality randomized trials that are typically used to assess effectiveness. Despite the limited clinical data, the US Federal Drug Administration approved the emergency use of hydroxychloroquine in COVID-19 patients. Soon after, conflicting evidence for the efficacy and safety of these drugs emerged, pressing the need for randomized controlled trials. In fact, the first randomized controlled trial of hydroxychloroquine for the treatment of SARV-CoV-2 infection that enrolled 150 patients did not show any effectiveness of the drug11. Currently, National Institute of Health (NIH) has started a blinded, placebo-controlled randomized clinical trial (NCT04332991), which aims to enroll more than 500 adults to further elucidate whether treatment with hydroxychloroquine can in fact help COVID-19 patients beyond standard hospital care. Similar clinical trials have also been undertaken in Canada, Australia and in multiple European countries. However, until conclusive evidence in support of chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine becomes available, the use of these compounds is being recommended only in an emergency situation for patients with severe COVID-19 symptoms while carefully considering the risks associated with this drug related to heart issues.

Remdesivir

Remdesivir is a broad spectrum antiviral treatment (meaning it works against a range of diseases), that has shown positive signs in animal models for treating viruses like SARS-CoV , MERS-CoV, and MERS. Remdesivir works by blocking the ability of viruses to replicate. For this reason, researchers are interested in testing Remdesivir as a possible treatment for COVID-19. Early in the spread of COVID-19 this drug was used to treat patients with severe symptoms on compassionate grounds. A small study with a limited number of patients had promising results as 36 of 53 patients (68%) with severe symptoms showed clinical improvements. A study with close to 300 patients with COVID-19 tested remdesivir in a randomized controlled trial and while the researchers noted a reduction in time to clinical improvement, no significant clinical benefit was associated with remdesivir treatment. However, larger randomized controlled trial of this treatment are currently underway to comprehensively evaluate remdesivir efficacy in treatment of COVID-19. Gilead, the pharmaceutical company that developed Remdesivir, has started a Phase 3 clinical trial as of March 2020. Approximately 1,000 randomized patients have been enrolled from countries with high prevalence of COVID-19 to test the safety and efficacy of Remdesivir in patients with moderate symptoms of COVID-19 compared to standard-of-care. Among the leading drug candidates, Remdesivir is considered to be the most promising.

The above two drugs are some of the most popular ones that have gained attention in the recent weeks, but as highlighted above, both are not proven treatments. Without conclusive evidence, it is not clear whether these drugs will improve recovery for all patients or if they are even safe. This is why in late March, the World Health Organization (WHO), launched an extraordinary international initiative to test over a dozen different treatment combinations in the 'SOLIDARITY' trial1. The trial will test several drugs, such as chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine, Remdesivir, and others as trials go underway in different countries. All of the drugs are approved treatment for other diseases and are being essentially re-purposed for treating COVID-19. The aim is by bringing together clinical data from more than 100 countries, the SOLIDARITY trial can quickly recruit thousands of patients, coordinate efforts to analyze the results, and ultimately generate evidence that can rapidly inform health authorities across the world.

Plasma Therapy – sharing the immunity

Drugs may be one option, but perhaps the treatment of COVID-19 may lie in something less pharmacological. One idea is to look towards the people who have beaten the virus i.e. the patients who have recovered from the disease. The answer may lie, quite literally,

within their veins.
As with any infection, the human body responds by generating an immune reaction, that produces antibodies that can bind and neutralize the pathogen. In the case of COVID-19, such antibodies are generated against components of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that block the virus from binding to the human cells, prevent them from causing an infection. Once COVID-19 patients develop enough antibodies, they can fight off the virus and see improvements in their health. Importantly, this built-up immunity remains within recovered patients' blood in case the virus reappears, and the antibodies need to be redeployed to attack the virus. One therapeutic hypothesis is that as more patients recover from COVID-19, it may be possible to transfuse the plasma (component of the blood that contains antibodies) from recovered patients into those who are suffering from severe COVID-19 infection. The recovered patients essentially share their immunity against SARS-CoV-2 infection helping others recover.
While the idea may seem peculiar, it won't be the first time a similar approach has been used. Plasma therapy was previously used during the 2002 SARS epidemic, various influenza pandemics (H1N1, H5N1) and against Ebola, demonstrating safety and effectiveness is certain cases. A small series of patients (5 adult patients in the first study and 10 adult patients in the second study) have already been treated with plasma therapy for COVID-19, showing clinical improvement after plasma transfusion containing anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies from recovered patients' donor blood. While the results are encouraging, as with previous testing, the plasma therapy intervention has not tested on a wider scale in a randomized controlled trial. In addition, the characteristics of the donor, the dosing and timing of the therapy, and other aspects of care cannot be assessed with the current research. Lastly, as with any immune response to a pathogen, the strength of immunity can diminish with time and make the patient vulnerable to possible reinfection. Hence, even with a generation of a primary immune response against SARS-CoV-2, it is unknown whether recovered patients or those who receive plasma therapy remain completely immune and protected against future reinfections. Researchers are now undertaking large-scale clinical trials to fully assess the utility of plasma therapy in improving clinical outcomes for COVID-19 positive patients without resulting in any adverse side-effects.

SARS-CoV-2 antibodies – creating the immunity

Although the presence of neutralizing antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 can lead to clinical improvements in patients with COVID-19, plasma therapy can be limited by the availability of patients who have recovered, the ability of different medical centres to collect plasma and perform transfusions, and adverse events related to sharing of plasma from one person to another. A similar but alternative option for treating patients with neutralizing anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies is to produce these antibodies in another organism – the quintessential research mouse or even a llama. Two recent studies have showed the production of anti-SARS-CoV2 antibodies in animal models that can be easily deployed for use in humans. Using a special mouse model that can generate human antibodies rather than mouse antibodies, a group of Dutch researchers exposed mice to a specific part of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (termed an antigen) such that the mice generate an immune response in a manner similar to seen in humans. Upon studying all the various human antibodies produced by the mice in response to SARS-COV-2 antigen, the researchers identified a potent antibody that could neutralize both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2. Similarly, an international group of researchers from Germany, Belgium and the US were initially using llamas to develop small neutralizing antibodies against SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV viruses that can be administered via inhalers, much like those used for the treatment of asthma. The researchers found that one of these neutralizing antibodies produced in llamas was also able to neutralize SARS-CoV-2 and can be mass produced in cell culture systems. It is worth noting that llamas belong to the camel family. While antibodies from both sources have only been tested in cell culture studies, they open a wide avenue for further development and production of these antibodies as therapeutics against COVID-19.

Vaccines – the end goal

All treatments, be they pharmacological or antibody-based, rely on people becoming sick before they receive any intervention. In medicine, a common idiom is that 'prevention is better than a cure,' and accordingly a vaccine provides the opportunity to stop the virus in its early infectious tracks. Since the genetic sequence for SARS-CoV-2 was first made available in early January, significant and rapid efforts have been undertaken to develop a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2.

Vaccines have been effective at preventing lethal infectious diseases such as polio, tetanus, measles and mumps to name a few and has even led to the eradication of smallpox. A vaccine against viral infections is generally composed of a weakened virus (live or dead) or a component of the virus (termed antigen) such that injection with the vaccine elicits an immune response without causing a complete infection. As the immune system gets activated, it starts producing neutralizing antibodies in the same manner as it would if the host was infected by the real virus. This induced immune response gives our cells the opportunity to retain this immune memory and consequently protect us from future infections for a period of time by quickly deploying to attack the virus.

The development of a vaccine is an arduous process that requires months of preclinical investigations, laboratory work to find good antigens that can generate an appropriate yet strong immune response, and showing that it can work in proof-of-principle animal studies. Under current circumstances, many steps involved in vaccine development have been accelerated but challenges around proper antigen identification and design, mitigating potential adverse effects (such as an allergic reaction to the vaccine) and determining how long vaccine-induced immune memory lasts remain. Currently, six candidate vaccines are in clinical trial stages, which test for safety and dosing of the vaccine, while over 70 vaccine candidates are in pre-clinical stages of testing. The majority of vaccines currently under development aim to induce neutralizing antibody production against parts of SARS-CoV2 virus that bind to the surface of human lung cells. If the virus can't bind or latch on to our cells, it will not be able to infect and replicate to cause any substantial harm.

The Pursuit of Excellence

COVID-19 pandemic has shown that we need the highest-level of evidence to decide which treatments are the most effective. While urgent situations may require that established drugs be given based upon limited evidence and on compassionate grounds (e.g., hydroxychloroquine in COVID-19), this, however, is not ideal. Research studies which are observational in nature are prone to bias and thus are not very reliable for determining effectiveness of a treatment. While it can seem exciting when some early results show promise, until they can be tested rigorously, it is possible the therapies are no better than supportive care. Sacrificing the rigour, standard, and quality of scientific research may expose patients to undue harm and pose strong ethical challenges for healthcare professionals. Randomized controlled trials have been considered the gold standard for judging the benefit of treatment for more than 70 years in evidence-based medicine, and in COVID-19, it will also be the method of choice to find which treatment is the best. High quality randomized trials remove bias by randomly allocating patients in to two groups and thus any other factor that might affect them are equally distributed. In addition, a control arm allows for direct comparison of the effectiveness of any treatment against another or placebo. Therefore, with many more treatments being tested on a daily basis for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19, the answers to how researchers and clinicians will finally treat the patients and control COVID-19 spread will lie in high-quality randomized controlled clinical trials.

“Because of this name, Allah will also fulfil many of the promises He made to the Promised Messiah (as)”: Waqf-e-Nau Mauritius’ virtual class with Huzoor(aba)

A group of waqifeen-e-nau in Mauritius had the good fortune of meeting with Hazrat Amir-ul Momineen (aba) on 13 December 2020 in a virtual class.

It is narrated that during the time of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra), Majlis-e-Irfan used to take place after Maghrib prayer at Masjid Mubarak in Qadian. On one occasion, Hazrat Musleh-e-Maud (ra) had the following poem read out for three days [in Majlis-e-Irfan]:

میں اپنے پیاروں کی نسبت ہر گز نہ کروں گا پسند کبھی
وہ چھوٹے درجہ پہ راضی ہوں اور ان کی نگاہ رہے نیچی

“I shall never expect from my loved ones that they are satisfied on a lower status and they set small goals [for themselves].”

With regard to this poem, Huzoor (ra) said, “I have written this poem for waqifeen-e-zindagi [life devotees].”

The class of waqifeen of Mauritius commenced with the recitation of a portion from the Holy Quran, which highlighted Mary’s mother who vowed to dedicate her child’s life for the cause of God. Following this, the above mentioned nazm, composed by Hazrat Musleh-eMaud (ra), was presented.

After the nazm was presented, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said, “You have done well, masha-Allah” and further asked how many waqifeen knew the meaning of this nazm.

Huzoor (aba) then added, “It should be translated and given to each and every waqf-e-nau so that they know Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II’s (ra) expectations of them.”

Following this, a brief report was presented by the national secretary waqf-e-nau. In the report, he stated that there were a total of 280 waqifeen-e-nau in Mauritius. Of the 280, 166 were boys and 114 were girls.

He further said that there were 18 waqifeen serving as life devotees, six serving as missionaries, five studying in Jamia International Ghana, one studying in Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada, three serving in MTA studio Mauritius, one serving in the Jamaat’s printing press in Burkina Faso, one serving under the Nusrat Jahan scheme and one serving in Dar-us-Salam office in Mauritius.

In addition, the secretary stated that between 2019-2020, one national Ijtema was held, one general meeting was held and a career guidance forum was conducted.

After delivering the brief report, the secretary

expressed that some waqifeen-e-nau were not active in any Jamaat related activities, nor in offering Namaz in congregation and further asked what could be done to improve this.
Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said:
"You are in the field working there; you know better what tactics and what strategy you should include in bringing them closer to the Jamaat. If they are well trained from the very childhood, then they will know their responsibility as Atfal and if their parents are also active in the Jamaat, then definitely they will also be very active members of the Waqf-e-Nau scheme. If parents are lazy and inactive – they are not taking part in the Jamaat activities, not observing their responsibilities, like offering the five daily prayers – then their children will also follow them. So you should ask the tarbiyat department to do the tarbiyat of parents so that they set a good example for their children."
Following this, a student of Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada said that since Jamia was being held online due to the pandemic, what Huzoor's (aba) advice was for students who are pursuing their studies online. Huzoor (aba) replied, "You have to be honest whilst you are studying online. Your teachers do not know where you are or what you are doing."
Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) further said:
"I know that some students – university students, school students and those who are studying online – are not actually involved in online studies and pretend and pose as though they are online, whereas they are not, yet their teachers think they are. So you have to be honest.
"Secondly, now that you have more time since you are sitting in your house, you should give some more time for extra studies, like reading the books of the Promised Messiah (as) and studying the commentary of the Holy Quran and other religious books that will help you increase your religious knowledge."
A waqif-e-nau, whilst asking a question, expressed that some of the best schools and colleges in Mauritius were co-educational schools. He further asked if they should attend those schools or give precedence to gender-isolated educational schools which are reserved for boys only and girls only.
Answering the question, Huzoor (aba) explained:
"If the best schools are co-educational schools where they are mixed with boys and girls and you are confident that you will not involve or indulge yourselves in bad activities and making friendships with girls and that you will only concentrate in your studies, then you can go to mixed schools. If you are not confident and you think you can go astray by mixing with girls, then it is better to go a boys' school."
Following this, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) was asked how a waqif-e-nau, who is working in the private sector, can make the best use of his time to serve the Jamaat and attain the pleasure of Allah.
Answering this, Huzoor (aba) said: "Waqf means that you have dedicated your life. Since you have dedicated your life for the cause of the Jamaat and Islam, then you should always consider that any time which is being spent by you should totally be spent for the betterment of the Jamaat."
Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) added:
"Whenever you get spare time, you should offer it to the Jamaat and say, 'Now, I am ready. I can give this much time regularly for Jamaat work'. At the same time, you should set your own example before your colleagues so they know that this person is honest in his work, is pious, discharges his duties towards his religion and offers his daily prayers."
Huzoor (aba) added, "In this way, you would have opened new avenues for tabligh."
A waqif-e-nau expressed that among the youth, many are addicted to mobile phones and spend less time playing sports. He asked Huzoor (aba) what could be done in relation to this.
Responding to the young waqif-e-nau, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said, "This is a matter of realisation of your duties. If you realise that your main objective and duty is to set good examples and not waste time, then instead of being involved in and getting addicted to mobile phones and other Internet games, you will not indulge in such matters. So, it is a matter of understanding.
"Every Ahmadi should understand that their main obligation is to offer the five daily prayers and not just merely offer them for the sake of offering prayers, but it should be done with the intention of achieving Allah's love."
Huzoor (aba) added:

"A child of 10 years of age should not spend more than one hour on mobile games … I do not say that you should not play mobile games. There are quite a number of games which can help you increase your knowledge and there are some games which are just a wastage of money."
Following this, Huzoor (aba) was asked about his reaction when he heard the revelation:

انی معك یامسرور

"Surely, I am with you, O Masroor"
Responding, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said:
"انی معك یامسرور was revealed to the Promised Messiah (as). Allah the Almighty has given the name Masroor to the Promised Messiah (as). So, when I was elected as the Khalifa of the time, then I came to know that this is not only a coincidence, but God wishes to help me at the same time. Because of this name, Allah the Almighty will also give me the glad tidings and, insha-Allah, fulfil so many of the promises which He promised to the Promised Messiah (as)."
Huzoor (aba) added:
"So, although it is not about myself, but it was a coincidence or God's plan that a Khalifa of the time was elected whose name was also Masroor. And I can see that Allah has been helping me in this regard and I pray that all those benefits which are attached to this revelation are fulfilled during my time."
Following this, a young waqif-e-nau asked Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) if it was advisable to study homeopathy as a profession as there were very few homeopathy doctors in Mauritius.
Huzoor (aba) said, "You will have to go outside, either to Germany or France to study homeopathy" and further said, "When you complete your education in France, or Germany or even in the UK – but France is also advance and it is easy for you to go to France – then, open a homeopathy clinic in Mauritius. That will be good for you. It is a good idea."
Upon being asked what the greatest problems an island like Mauritius could face in an eventual world war, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) explained:
"Whether Mauritius is involved in the war or not, it does not matter because nowadays, the world is like a global village as all countries are interdependent. So, if there is a world war and you have food items which are being imported, then you will suffer to get those food items. If your trading with another country has been badly affected by the world war and their economy has crippled, then Mauritius will also be affected. So the people of different nations will suffer whether they are directly involved in the world war or not because nowadays, as I have said, we are dependent on each other. So, this interdependence will make every country suffer because economically, the whole world will see the crisis."
Following this, a waqif-e-nau asked how we know our previous sins have been forgiven. Responding to this, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said:
"If you know that all your sins have been forgiven, you might start committing more sins. So the best way is to not know. Only Allah knows. If you have committed any sin and you do istighfar [repent] and seek Allah's refuge and come under Allah's shelter, then you will feel that you are not committing that sin again. When you feel that you are not committing that sin again, or any other sins, and you are now inclined towards the commandments of Allah and following the true teachings of Islam, then this is one way of knowing your past sins have been forgiven."
A waqif-e-nau asked Huzoor (aba) whether one oppose a government that one comes to learn is corrupt. Responding to this, Huzoor (aba) said, "You should use your right to vote and bring those people into the government who are not corrupt – those who are honest and sincere to the country."
A waqif-e-nau expressed that a large number of youth found it difficult to get married or were simply not interested in marriage. He asked what could be done to solve this issue.
Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) explained:
"There is a rishta nata department in your country and an international rishta nata department also. You can write to the international department, which is being run by wakalat-e-tabshir here in London, or ask your rishta nata department there."
Whilst offering guidance for those who do not wish to marry, Huzoor (aba) said, "The Holy Prophet (sa) said, 'Those who do not follow my sunnah are not from me.'"

Upon being asked if it was possible for a dead person to see what was happening to their close relatives on earth, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said:
"If God wishes, He can let the person know what is happening in the world, but it is up to Allah the Almighty. If a person was very pious and prayed for their children to be pious, faithful, sincere and honest … and if they are living according to the desire of the deceased person, then Allah the Almighty may show them what is happening in this world, but it is up to Allah."
Following this, a question was asked about the election of the new president in America and whether it would have an impact on the timing of a world war.
Answering this, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said, "Nobody knows. If it is Allah's plan which is destined to happen, then it will happen and it won't matter if the American president has changed."
Huzoor (aba) added:
"As the world is forgetting their responsibilities – they are not following the teachings given by Allah the Almighty; they are not discharging their duties owed to Allah and [fellow] human beings – then Allah's wrath and punishment will come and it can come in the shape of a world war, no matter whether there is an American president or any other president."
Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) further added:
"We should pray that Allah the Almighty has mercy on us and that it should not happen in our lifetime and [we should pray that] Allah the Almighty changes the mind-sets of people and they accept the teachings of Islam and what Allah says. Then, yes, we can hope that it can be stopped. Otherwise, under the present circumstances, no matter who the president is, it seems that it is going to happen. When? Allah knows best."
A waqif-e-nau asked Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) about the Jamaat's view on extraterrestrial life. Huzoor (aba) stated:
"Yes, we believe that there is life on other planets as well … The Promised Messiah (as) has said that there are quite a number of universes and it is quite possible that there is life in other universes and on other planets."
Upon being asked how one could safeguard oneself from the vices of society, Huzoor (aba) said:
"Allah the Almighty has said that Salat is the way of saving oneself from the bad effects of the evils of society. So, your first and foremost duty is that you follow the commandments of Allah and be a good Muslim."
A waqif-e-nau expressed that in college, they had classes based on inter-religious talks and asked what the best way to present Islam Ahmadiyyat was.
Responding to the young waqif-e-nau, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said:
"If you read The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam or take help from a missionary or an elder who can provide a summary of the book, then it can help you present the true teachings of Islam; or, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV's (rh) book, Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues – this is how you can present Islam. There are quite a number of my addresses during peace symposia which reflect the true teachings of Islam, how a Muslim should live, how to improve your standard of living and how to gain closeness to Allah the Almighty. So there are quite a number of books in our literature that can help you to present Islam before your [fellow] students."
Upon being asked why most people were greedy and what one could do to refrain from this habit, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) said:
"Allah the Almighty has stated that one must learn to be content. The Holy Prophetsa has said that when you see somebody who is pious, God fearing and observing all of the commandments of Allah the Almighty, then try to follow him and pray to Allah the Almighty that He may also give you that status. But if you see a worldly person who is wealthy and is not discharging his duties towards his fellow human beings, but rather accumulating money and usurping the rights of others, then pray to Allah Almighty that He may save you from this. Greed is something which affects you due to your environment."

At the end, Huzoor (aba) concluded the class with a silent prayer.

(Originally published in Al Hakam)